

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 1556

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PDEV, IS, JO
SUBJECT: HONEYMOON ON THE WEST BANK

1. SUMMARY: NEW TACTICS ADOPTED BY NEW MILGOV, THE NEW MILGOV FOR THE WEST BANK SEEMS TO BE PROJECTING AN IMAGE OF ATTEMPTING TO COOPERATE WITH THE MAYORS ON SOCIAL-ECONOMIC MATTERS WHILE MAINTAINING A TOUGH LINE ON SECURITY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE NEW WEST BANK MILGOV BRIG. GEN. BINYAMIN BEN-ELIEZER TOGETHER WITH HIS TOP AIDES MET MAY 31 WITH THE HEBRON CITY COUNCIL IN THE CITY HALL. CITY COUNCILMAN KHALED 'ASILI GAVE POLOFF READ OUT OF MILGOV'S REACTION TO FOLLOWING REQUESTS:

(A) EXTENSION OF CITY LIMITS. BEN-ELIEZER AGREED THAT CITY LIMITS COULD BE EXTENDED SOUTHWARDS TO INCLUDE AREA DESIGNATED FOR HEBRON'S INDUSTRIAL ZONE. EXTENSION
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OF BORDERS NORTHEASTWARD TO INCLUDE RESIDENTIAL AREA BETWEEN CITY AND KIRYAT ARBA APPROVED SO LONG AS EXTENSION DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY PART OF AREA PREVIOUSLY CLOSED OFF FOR JEWISH SETTLEMENT. (COMMENT: MOST, IF NOT ALL, THE AREA DOES NOT, REPEAT NOT, FALL WITHIN THE RESTRICTED ZONE.

(B) SCHOOLS. APPROVAL "IN CONFORMITY WITH THE LAW" OF TWO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. (COMMENT: THE CITY COUNCIL IS NOT SURE EXACTLY WHAT BEN-ELIEZER MEANS BY "CONFORMITY WITH THE LAW.")

(C) POLYTECHNIC. APPROVAL OF HEBRON GRADUATES' PROPOSED TECHNICAL COLLEGE. "I HOPE I WON'T REGRET THIS DECISION," BEN-ELIEZER REPORTEDLY SAID IN AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO HIS PROBLEMS AT THE KALANDIA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL NEAR RAMALLAH--SCENE OF SEVERAL MOLOTOV COCKTAIL ATTACKS.

(D) VEHICLES. APPROVAL OF ENTRY INTO WEST BANK OF TWO VEHICLES DONATED BY HEBRONITES IN JORDAN.

(E) VISITS TO PRISONERS. APPROVAL FOR BETTER ACCESS BY CITY OFFICIALS TO ARAB PRISONERS.

(F) STREETS. AN OFFER BY THE MILGOV TO SHARE IN IMPROVEMENT OF AN INTERSECTION AT THE EASTERN ENTRANCE TO THE CITY.

(G) WATER AND ELECTRICITY. THE MILGOV PROMISED TO STUDY MUNICIPAL REQUEST TO EXPAND ELECTRICAL GENERATING CAPACITY AND DRILL A WELL TO INCREASE WATER SUPPLY.

(H) NEW POST OFFICE. REFUSED BY MILGOV ON GROUNDS THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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EXISTING BUILDING WAS BETTER THAN TEL AVIV'S.

3. 'ASILI SAID BEN ELIEZER'S COMPORTMENT WAS MUCH MORE MILITARY THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, AND HE ENDED MEETING WITH A STRONG STATEMENT THAT HIS OVERRIDING CONCERN WAS SECURITY. 'ASILI BELIEVES THE NEW MILGOV'S DECISIONS ON PROJECTS, SOME OF WHICH HAVE BEEN PENDING FOR OVER A YEAR, REFLECT A REVERSAL IN THE FORMER MILGOV POLICY OF UNDERCUTTING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR MUNICIPALITIES BY BLOCKING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

4. THE NEW MILGOV TOOK A SIMILARLY FORTHCOMING POSITION IN A MEETING WITH THE JENIN MUNICIPALITY MAY 30, ACCORDING TO BOTH THE ARABIC AND HEBREW PRESS.

5. COMMENT: BEN ELEIZER'S POSITION APPARENTLY DERIVES FROM ORDERS OF HIS SUPERIORS RATHER THAN ANY PERSONAL LIBERAL TENDENCY. THE NEW POLICY IS REMINISCENT OF WEIZMAN'S CONCESSIONS IN RAMALLAH ON HIS VISIT THERE IN FEBRUARY. AT THAT TIME, HE TOLD THE MAYOR TO GET USED TO THE IDEA OF ISRAELI CONTROL OF THE WEST BANK, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, HE TOLD THE MILGOV TO BE MORE LENIENT

ON ECONOMIC-SOCIAL ISSUES AND STRICTER ON
SECURITY. THAT MESSAGE NOW SEEMS GENERAL. MILGOV APPROVAL
FOR THE POLYTECHNIC COULD FACILITATE ANERA'S PARTICIPATION
WITH THAT PROJECT. PROSPECTS FOR A MILGOV GO AHEAD FOR
THE HALHUL VEGETABLE MARKET--ALSO PARTLY AN ANERA
PROJECT NOW LOOK SOMEWHAT MORE FHOPEFUL ALTHOUGH HALHUL
MAYOR HAS NOT AS YET SEEN BEN ELEIZER.
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Message Attributes

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